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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, Oct. 21, 1937

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Simple Desserts for Children."

ANNOUNCEMENT: A Friday program devoted to facts on child nutrition. Menus and recipe from U. S. Bureau of Home Economics. Bulletins available: "Food for Young Children" and "Good Proportions in the Diet."

---ooOoo---

The other day, when I was riding on the street car, a young woman got on, with a small boy, whom I judged to be at least six years old. "How old is the boy?" asked the conductor. "Five," said the young woman, promptly. She and the child sat across the aisle. As soon as the conductor was out of hearing distance, the young woman turned to me. "Oliver will soon be too big to pass for a five-year-old," she said. "But I can't complain. He's been riding free, for a year now, ever since his sixth birthday."

Oliver looked sheepish, and pulled a sack of candy from his pocket. Fifteen minutes later, the child's mother called his name, so suddenly that I jumped. "Oliver!" said his mother. "How many pieces of candy have you eaten?" "Two," said Oliver, hesitatingly. "Two!" repeated his mother. "You have eaten at least four, and you know I said you could have only two. Why did you lie to me, Oliver?"

The small boy looked sheepish indeed, as he licked the last bits of chocolate from his lips, and surrounding regions. "Just you wait!" scolded his mother. "Just you wait, till we get home! There's one thing I won't stand for, and that's a child who tells stories!"

Oliver and his mother got off at the next corner, and I meditated on the logic of strange and unnatural parents who will lie for a year about their child's age, and then expect this child to respect truth and honor. It's a queer world, as some one has said before.

I read a magazine article this morning which reminded me of the street car episode. According to the author of this article, most of the lies of childhood are based on fear of the parents, and parents often frighten their children into telling lies. Let me quote a sentence: "Fear of parents is one of the most distressing fears of childhood. Why should the child be afraid of his parents? The parents' anger, the parents' punishment -- perhaps just the parents' mild disapproval -- hangs over him like a cloud. When a parent discovers that his child is afraid of him, he ought to do almost anything to remove the fear, and establish a better relationship.

We won't go into the subject, today, of why children tell stories, but it is an interesting one.



I saved the questions about children this week so that they might be answered in one Chat. The first question is from a mother who wants to know what foods should be included in a daily diet for a growing child.

First, there is at least a pint of milk a day. Many children want more, and can take it, without omitting other essential foods.

Second, there is an egg, or a little meat, or fish. These foods supply the iron, which is lacking in milk.

Third, there is fruit, in two meals out of three. This is a good rule to keep in mind, all the time. Fresh fruit is best -- fruit juice or fruit pulp, for very young children. If fresh fruit is not available, dried fruit may be used at one meal, and either a little tomato juice, or a raw green vegetable, such as lettuce, in the other. These foods help supply the needed vitamins.

Fourth, every one of the three meals a day should provide for "roughage." It may be supplied by whole-grain cereal breakfast foods, or whole-wheat bread, or by potatoes. These foods are needed to prevent constipation.

Fifth, at one meal a day, there should be some vegetable besides potatoes.

Sixth, every meal should contain a little butter or cream. Butter fat is an essential food for children, for it contains a most important vitamin.

You might like to make a list of the foods your child eats, and see if they include, each day, all six of these different kinds of foods: milk, eggs, vegetables, fruit, whole-grain cereals, and butter or cream.

Question Number Two: "My six-year-old daughter seems to have an over-developed sweet tooth. Do you think it is harmful for her to have candy, if it is pure candy?"

The answer: Sugar itself is a desirable part of the child's diet. However, it sustains a bad reputation, in some parts, because it is served in too large quantities, and between meals, thus spoiling the child's appetite for other essential foods. Don't let sweets take the place of the foods I have just mentioned. Sweets should never be given to children between meals, or during the first course of a meal. Careful mothers even train their children to eat cereals without sugar. The proper time to serve sweets is at the end of a meal. A little wholesome candy may be served with the dessert as a special treat.

It is time now to mention simple desserts for children, since that's the subject of this talk.

I have divided children's desserts into four classes, beginning with junket. Junket, as you probably know, is simply milk, coagulated by the use of rennet tablets. Many children who will not drink milk, will beg for it, in the form of junket. Recipes for this dessert are always given on the package of rennet tablets. Junket is a tasty dessert, when properly flavored. All the common flavoring extracts can be used, also concentrated maple sirup, and caramel sirup. Junket may be served with sliced, fresh fruits, or with a spoonful of jelly or jam.



Next on our list of desserts for children is pie. What's that? One of my listeners says pie is not good for children. Well, ordinary pie isn't. This is a special pie, made by putting applesauce or other fruit, between slices of very thin, crisp, buttered toast, or large crisp crackers. The toast, or crackers, take the place of pastry, which is too rich for a child to digest easily. Toast and crackers have a pleasing, crisp, texture, and browned flavor. The stewed fruit filling of this pie, is better than the very sweet fruit filling, of ordinary pie.

Another wholesome dessert for children is fruit tart, made in the English manner; that is, a deep dish pie, with no under crust. The upper crust should be made of biscuit dough, instead of rich pastry. Little individual pies can easily be made this way, in custard cups, or ramekins.

Our third class of desserts includes custards, of all kinds, excellent because of the milk and eggs they contain. Plain cakes and cookies come next. Sponge cake is one of the most suitable for children.

There is one fact that I want to emphasize, in connection with desserts. It is not necessary for children to have "made" desserts, which develop a taste for rich, sweet foods. Rather, they should be taught to like fruits, raw, or very simply prepared; custards, very slightly sweetened; and other combinations which will help to supply growing bodies with the things they need.

The dinner suggestion today is for Sunday --- roast chicken and everything, including a dessert which is as pleasing to grown-ups, as it is to children. This menu is as follows: Roast Chicken, Candied Sweet Potatoes, Cauliflower, Spiced Apple Jelly, and Spanish Cream. I gave you the recipe for Spiced Apple Jelly recently, and now I'll tell you how to make Spanish Cream. It really is a delicious dessert. Seven ingredients, for Spanish Cream:

1 quart milk	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons granulated gelatin	5 eggs
4 tablespoons cold water	Flavoring
1/2 cup sugar	

Count the ingredients, please, to see that they are seven: (Repeat)

Soak the gelatin in the cold water, until soft. Heat the milk in a double boiler and add to it the sugar and the salt. Beat the egg yolks, and gradually add the hot milk to them. Mix well, pour back into the double boiler, and cook this mixture until it thickens like a soft custard. Remove it from the fire, add the softened gelatin to this hot mixture, stir well, strain, and cool. Meanwhile beat the egg whites until fluffy. Fold them into the custard after it has begun to set, and add 1/4 teaspoon of almond extract, or any other desired flavoring. Pour into individual molds, or a pudding dish wet with cold water, and set away to become firm. Serve with or without cream.

The entire menu again: Roast Chicken, Candied Sweet Potatoes, Cauliflower, Spiced Apple Jelly, and Spanish Cream.

